

Hon. Lewis A. Kaplan
Daniel Patrick Moynihan
United States Courthouse
500 Pearl St.
New York, NY 10007-1312

Dear Judge Kaplan

I've never met Sam, but I've been harmed immensely by his actions, losing most of what I had.

He helped as well, but not even a fraction of what would make up for the loss and the upheaval his actions caused in my life.

He is person non-grata in my community, and if I publicly say anything positive about Sam, it could be really bad for me.

I have every reason to stay quiet and not say anything to help this person who's harmed me.

But it's clear to me that Sam is not the villain portrayed in the media.

The reason is that his actions are just not consistent with that.

Imagine a faker who just wants to *seem* altruistic. They'll do things that *seem* altruistic. They'll help out at soup kitchens. They'll post on social media about the latest cause célèbre.

They won't do things that are offputting. They won't do things that make them seem like a weirdo. That would totally defeat the purpose. They're trying to *seem* altruistic, so they will only do things that actually seem that way.

SBF did some things that seem altruistic, like helping people in Ukraine. But mostly he did stuff that made him look like a total weirdo.

He cared about chickens in university. And people hate animal rights activists. He went into finance, a nearly universally reviled profession, so he could give his money away to people across the world. He started a crypto company and used the funds to help with AI safety, which was considered totally antithetical to the crypto community's values of techno-optimism. Not to mention, it was just generally considered strange.

If he was just faking altruism, he did a *terrible* job of it.

And then you hear about things he's done since.

To maintain his vegan diet he lived off of just *bread* for *months*. With just the occasional peanut butter.

Could you do that, to uphold your values, during the most stressful period of your life? I don't know about you, but I certainly couldn't.

He clearly isn't evil. It just doesn't fit.

He's clearly a neuro-atypical, compassionate nerd who has high risk tolerance and who doesn't really get people

Now, all the altruism in the world doesn't mean he's innocent.

And I think he should even go to prison for a time. He risked a lot of people's money that they didn't consent to risk.

But what's the point of prison? The point of prison, to me at least, is to keep society safe from dangerous people by 1) deterring people from committing crimes and 2) keeping the most dangerous ones away from society.

In terms of deterrence, a shorter sentence doesn't make a big difference compared to life. I think most white collar criminals will do anything they can to avoid 5 years in prison and the same for 50 years.

Also, most would consider losing all of your wealth and being publicly shamed by the entire globe to be more than enough of a deterrence. If Sam got, say, a 5 year sentence, I don't think there will be any potential white collar criminals in the world who look at what happened to Sam who think "Yeah, losing everything, being publicly shamed across the globe, then going to American prison for years doesn't seem that bad. I can handle that."

Anybody who thinks that wouldn't be deterred also wouldn't be deterred by life in prison either. They are the true sociopaths who cannot be deterred by any punishment, and as such, should be locked away forever to protect the rest of us.

Which brings us to the other reason for prison: is Sam an ongoing threat to society and prison is the only solution to that?

I think after all of this, he's very unlikely to get much power or money for projects. His reputation is trashed. And, if you're really worried about that, can you simply say that once he gets out he can't work in finance or something? Or if he controls over a certain amount of money, he needs to have an adult in the room with more experience who can pull the breaks? Seems like a better solution than having him wasting away in a cell, costing the tax-payers money, contributing nothing to society.

Speaking as one of Sam's victims, I think the world would be better off if he didn't spend the rest of his life in jail.

His actions are just not consistent with somebody who is pretending to try to do good. He is genuinely trying to do good and I think that affects the likelihood that he's an ongoing danger to society.

Anyways, I don't know him. I don't know the legal system. I don't know how much discretion you have.

I hope that when you make a decision, you think about what made you want to be a judge in the first place. I hope you think about what your highest ideals are and what those principles would say in this situation. I hope that you keep in mind that at least one of his victims would be incredibly sad if he was locked away for life.

From Kat Woods